

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PRS-01 H-02 SSM-05  
OC-06 CCO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 NSCE-00 SSO-00 PA-02  
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 ACDA-10 MC-02  
ERDA-07 SAJ-01 /107 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:EOJONES:RGH

APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

S/PRS - MR. BROWN (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

SSM - MR. MC ANDREW

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

NEA/ARN - MR. REUTHER

NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH

S/S - R. PERITO

-----180303 087358 /70

O 180121Z FEB 77 ZFF5

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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USMISSION SINAI

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO  
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
USCINCEUR  
INFO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - FEBRUARY 17

.  
FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS  
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR FEBRUARY 17,  
1977:

Q. ON THE CONCUSSION BOMBS, WAS THERE AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF  
SOME KIND AT THE WHITE HOUSE?

A. YES, THERE WAS. THE WHITE HOUSE MADE THAT ANNOUNCE-  
MENT A FEW MOMENTS AGO.

Q. FOR THOSE LESS FORTUNATE, WHAT DID IT SAY?  
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A. THE DECISION WAS MADE NOT TO SELL THE CBU-72 WEAPONS  
TO ISRAEL. I DO NOT THINK THERE IS ANY POINT IN MY  
GOING OVER WHAT JODY POWELL OFFERED AT SOME LENGTH  
AT THE WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING. I WILL JUST PROVIDE THE  
BASIC POINTS. THE DECISION WAS MADE NOT TO GO AHEAD WITH  
THE SALE. THE SECOND POINT, THE UNITED STATES HAS NO  
INTENTION OF SELLING THESE WEAPONS TO ANY OTHER NATION.  
IN FACT, WE ARE REASSESSING THE NEED TO RETAIN THESE  
WEAPONS IN OUR OWN INVENTORY. AND I THINK THE FINAL POINT

WOULD BE THE PRESIDENT HAS DECIDED TO GO FORWARD WITH THE  
SALE OF TANKS AND HOWITZERS, THAT PART OF THE PREVIOUS  
ARRANGEMENT.

Q. GO FORWARD WITH WHAT?

A. THE SALE OF THE TANKS AND HOWITZERS.

Q. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FLIR?

A. THE FLIR IS STILL UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT. AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THAT CONSIDERATION IS PRIMARILY OF A TECHNICAL NATURE. I THINK THERE WERE A NUMBER OF OTHER QUESTIONS ASKED AT THE WHITE HOUSE THIS MORNING, AND I WOULD REFER YOU TO THE RESULT OF THAT DISCUSSION.

Q. I AM SORRY TO GO TO THE CONCUSSION BOMBS STORY AGAIN AND ASK YOU QUESTIONS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ASKED AT THE WHITE HOUSE. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN THE DECISION WAS MADE. WAS THAT TAKEN UP?

A. I BELIEVE THE DECISION WAS MADE EARLIER THIS WEEK. JODY POWELL, IN ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION, SAID THAT IT WAS FELT DESIRABLE -- THE PRESIDENT FELT IT DESIRABLE, UNCLASSIFIED

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AS DID THE SECRETARY--THAT THE DECISION BE COMMUNICATED PERSONALLY BY THE SECRETARY TO THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT.

Q. ONE POINT, I DON'T REMEMBER WHEN IT WAS, BUT YOU DESCRIBED THE REVIEW OF THE CONCUSSION BOMBS ALSO AS A TECHNICAL MATTER. NOW YOU SAID THE FLIR REVIEW INVOLVES TECHNICAL QUESTIONS. ARE THESE TECHNICAL QUESTIONS OF THE SAME NATURE AS --?

A. I DO NOT RECALL EVER CHARACTERIZING OUR CONSIDERATION OF THE CBU ASPECT OF THE SALE AS A PURELY TECHNICAL MATTER AT ALL.

Q. YOU DESCRIBED THE WHOLE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE PACKAGE AS A TECHNICAL THING. BEFORE YOU GOT THE LETTERS OF OFFER FROM THE PENTAGON IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT, YOU REFERRED TO THE WHOLE PACKAGE AS BEING DELAYED DUE TO ALL KINDS OF TECHNICAL BUREAUCRATIC -- I AM NOT QUOTING, BUT --.

A. AS I RECALL, I SAID IT WAS UNDER REVIEW, UNDER

DISCUSSION, UNDER CONSIDERATION. I DO NOT RECALL USING THE WORDS "PURELY TECHNICAL." BUT I AM INFORMED THAT THE FLIR DISCUSSION WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IS PRIMARILY OF A TECHNICAL NATURE.

Q. IT IS DIFFERENT THEN FROM THE REVIEW THAT TOOK PLACE WITH REGARD TO THE CONCUSSION BOMBS.

A. I THINK IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO COMPARE. I AM

REALLY NOT -- I TOLD YOU EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT HOW THE FLIR IS BEING DISCUSSED. THAT IS THE SUM TOTAL OF WHAT I HAVE ON IT. I WOULD NOT WANT TO TRY TO MAKE A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE FLIR CONSIDERATION AND THE CBU CONSIDERATION.  
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Q. CAN YOU GIVE ME AN IDEA OF WHAT YOU MEAN BY "TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS" HERE? I MEAN, IF YOU DON'T HAVE IT --

A. WELL, IN A COMPLICATED WEAPONS SYSTEM, OBVIOUSLY YOU GET INTO COMPONENTS, PARTS, INSTALLATION, AND THAT KIND OF THING, NUMBERS. I PRESUME BY "TECHNICAL" WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THE MODALITY OF OPERATION AND THAT KIND OF THING.

Q. IT COULD NOT BE THAT A TECHNICAL CONSIDERATION COULD END UP DELAYING OR CANCELLING THE SALE?

A. I HAVE NO IDEA. I AM NOT GOING TO -- WHILE THE THING IS UNDER DISCUSSION, I COULD NOT OFFER A GUESS AS TO HOW IT IS GOING TO TURN OUT.

Q. COULD YOU CHECK, PLEASE, ON A REPORT THAT CAME OUT SEVERAL TIMES, AS A MATTER OF FACT, IN THE LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS TO THE EFFECT THAT SECRETARY VANCE GAVE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR DINITZ ASSURANCE OF THIS ADMINISTRATION THAT COMMITMENTS ON THE PRESIDENTIAL LEVEL MADE PRIOR TO THE ELECTION WOULD BE HONORED BY THIS ADMINISTRATION AS WELL?

A. I CAN LOOK INTO WHAT IS ON THE PUBLIC RECORD WITH REGARD TO WHAT MR. VANCE HAS SAID.

Q. NO, NO. I AM NOT ASKING YOU THAT. THE REPORT IS THAT HE GAVE THAT ASSURANCE TO DINITZ. AND WHAT I AM INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT, IF YOU COULD, IS WHETHER THAT REPORT IS IN FACT ACCURATE. THE AMBASSADOR, AFTER SEEING THE SECRETARY A WEEK OR SO AGO, ANSWERED IT NEGATIVELY, SAYING HE HAD NO REASON TO THINK THAT ANY PRIOR COMMITMENT WOULD NOT BE HONORED. HE PUT IT IN THE NEGATIVE. I AM

ASKING THE QUESTION POSITIVELY. WAS SUCH AN ASSURANCE  
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PASSED ON IN DECEMBER OR JANUARY BY SECRETARY VANCE TO

THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR?

A. YOU RECOGNIZE THAT I AM NOT GOING TO GET A PRECISE READ-OUT OF ANY DIPLOMATIC CHATS BETWEEN THE TWO GENTLEMEN. I WILL CERTAINLY LOOK INTO THAT AND SEE WHAT I CAN GET FOR YOU, BUT I AM NOT HOPEFUL I AM GOING TO GET A CLEAR-CUT ANSWER. I WOULD REFER YOU, IF I MAY, TO THE QUESTION PUT TODAY TO JODY POWELL ON THE ISSUE OF COMMITMENTS IN AND CONTINUITY OF FOREIGN POLICY, AND I THINK HE GAVE A VERY GOOD ANSWER ON THAT IN THIS SPECIFIC CONTEXT.

Q. MAY I HELP YOU ON THIS POINT?

A. YES.

Q. IN THE INTERVIEW OF THE NEW YORK TIMES, THEY ASKED A DIRECT QUESTION OF MR. VANCE IN THE MANNER THAT MARVIN ASKED, AND HE SAID NO.

A. THAT HE MADE NO SUCH --?

Q. HE MADE NO SUCH COMMITMENT.

A. I AM GLAD YOU REFRESHED MY MEMORY ON IT.

Q. ON THE OTHER HAND, DIDN'T FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON SAY TWO OR THREE WEEKS AGO THAT HE HAD BEEN GIVEN ASSURANCES THAT THE PAST FORD COMMITMENTS WOULD BE KEPT? ANYWAY, WHY DON'T YOU STILL LOOK INTO THE WHOLE QUESTION?

A. I WILL, BUT I ASK YOU TO LOOK AT HOW JODY POWELL HANDLED THIS QUESTION TODAY. I WISH I HAD HIS WORDS IN FRONT OF ME, BUT IT WAS, I THINK, PUT IN VERY GOOD PERSPECTIVE.

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2. EXCERPTS FROM WHITE HOUSE TRANSCRIPT COVERING CBU ISSUE WILL BE SENT TO THE SECRETARY VIA SEPTTEL.  
HARTMAN

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NNN



## Message Attributes

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**Executive Order:** N/A  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009